

700 Children's Drive
Columbus, Ohio 43205-2696
nationwidechildrens.org

RINGWORM (TINEA CORPORIS)

Ringworm is the name of a type of infection of the skin that is caused by a fungus (a plant which is too small to see). Ringworm is not caused by a worm. The rash starts as tiny red pimples. The pimples spread out and form a round or oval area. The edges of the area are red, raised, or scaly. The rash usually appears on only a few places on the skin, but it may occur anywhere on the body. The rash may itch. Ringworm can spread to other people if they touch the rash, or if they touch anything that has touched the rash.

HOW RINGWORM IS DIAGNOSED

The doctor will diagnose ringworm by looking at the rash. The doctor may also scrape a few scales from the infected area and send it to the lab for examination under a microscope.

RINGWORM OF THE SKIN AND FEET

The doctor will prescribe an antifungal cream. The cream is rubbed into the skin in the area of the rash.

It is important to apply the cream just past the outside edges of the rash. This keeps the infection from spreading.

DOCTOR'S ORDER

- Apply a thin layer of _____ antifungal cream on the area of the ringworm _____ times a day.
- Continue to use the cream for one week after all signs of the rash are gone.

HOW TO PUT ON THE ANTIFUNGAL CREAM

1. Wash and dry your hands.
2. Wash the rash with soap and water.
3. Dry the rash completely with a paper towel or cloth towel. Do not touch this towel to healthy skin. (A cloth towel must be washed before using it again.)
4. Read the label on the cream that your doctor ordered.
5. Apply a thin layer of cream to the rash. Spread the cream on the outside area of the rash first, then spread the cream toward the center of the rash (Picture 1).
6. Wash and dry your hands well.



Picture 1 Spread the cream from the outer part of the rash toward the center.

HOW TO PREVENT RINGWORM

The fungus grows well on warm, dark, moist areas of the body. To prevent ringworm:

- Keep the skin clean and dry.
- Dry the skin well after washing.
- Wear clean clothes every day (Picture 2).
- Wash your hands well if you touch a ringworm rash or the hands of someone who has ringworm.
- Do not share towels.



Picture 2 Wear clean clothes every day.

OTHER ADVICE

- Once you begin to treat the rash with cream, your child may return to school.
- Wash the bathtub, bathroom sink, or pan well after each use. **Do not use the kitchen sink to wash the rash.**
- Use a clean towel and washcloth each time. Reusing the towel or washcloth can spread ringworm.
- Explain to the child and family members not to share towels and washcloths.
- Keep your child's fingernails short.
- Teach your child not to touch the rash, and to wash his hands **right away** if he does.
- It is best not to cover ringworm with a bandage.

WHEN TO CALL THE DOCTOR

Call your child's doctor if the rash does not seem to be healing after 2 weeks, or if the rash has not healed completely after 4 weeks.

If you have any questions, be sure to ask your doctor or nurse.